# BAREFOCT GEN

BONES INTO DUST



**VOLUME SEVEN** 

Keiji Nakazawa



Cartoonist Keiji Nakazawa was seven years old and living in Hiroshima in the early days of August 1945 when the city was destroyed by an atomic bomb dropped by the United States. Starting a few months before that event, his ten-volume saga Barefoot Gen shows life in Japan after years of war and privations, as seen through the eyes of seven-year-old Gen Nakaoka.

By Volume Seven, Gen has grown old enough to think about the legacy of the victims of the atomic bombing. Picking up from Volume Six, the story opens with Gen searching for a printer willing to publish an eyewitness account of the bombing written by "Papa," the journalist who serves as a father figure to Gen's war orphan friends. By hook and crook Gen and Ryuta manage to get the book printed and distributed, only to arouse the wrath of U.S. Army censors, who teach them a hard lesson about the politics of memory. Meanwhile, Gen's brother Koji returns home at last, only to find that their mother is on her deathbed.

"...some of the best comics ever done. Nakazawa, I'm sure, will be considered one of the great comic artists of this century, because he tells the truth in a plain, straightforward way, filled with real human feelings."

-R. Crumb, cartoonist

"Gen effectively bears witness to one of the central horrors of our time. This vivid and harrowing story will burn a radioactive crater in your memory that will never let you forget it. Gen is one of those very few comix that actually pulls off the essential magic trick... those little marks on paper come to fully realized life."

-Art Spiegelman, cartoonist, Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Maus

"Nakazawa's graphic presentation of what it was like to survive the atomic bombing of Hiroshima should be required reading for all citizens, beginning with the President. Perhaps then we might gain the maturity to stop such madness."

-Hunter & Amory Lovins
Friends of the Earth

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\*Part 7 of a ten-part series

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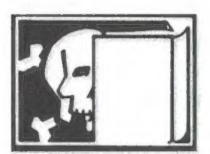
Keiji Nakazawa

## **BAREFOOT GEN**

#### VOLUME SEVEN: BONES INTO DUST

#### **KEIJI NAKAZAWA**

Translated by Project Gen



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# Hiroshima and Chernobyl: How Nina Brought Gen to the Ukraine

Nina Mikhailovna Vasilenko is a Ukrainian poet. Until 2001 she taught elementary school in the small village of Makalevichi, 75 kilometers southwest of Chernobyl.

The accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant on April 26, 1986 was devastating to Nina's village, but it was not until May that people learned just how terrible a disaster had occurred. Vast numbers of soldiers, doctors, radiation monitors, truck drivers and laborers were dispatched to Chernobyl. When soldiers suffering acute radiation exposure were removed unconscious from the disaster site, civilians were mobilized to replace them. Nina's husband, a truck driver, was ordered by the Soviet Army to haul concrete blocks for a helicopter base for firefighting operations at the plant. Through that summer and fall, he spent eight to ten hours a day delivering loads inside the contaminated zone. When he returned to Kiev and his truck was measured for radioactivity, the equipment gave off a loud metallic noise. Many of his coworkers died, and in 2000 Nina's husband, too, died of liver cancer.

Nina herself has suffered from heart trouble, her eldest son from thyroid disease, and one of her grandchildren from a brain tumor. Not a single person in Makalevichi is free of health problems. A village that had a population of 680 before Chernobyl has now been reduced to 390 by death and people moving away; the elementary school is in danger of closing.

The same year as the Chernobyl accident, a group of Japanese citizens, with the help of a Ukraine newspaper, initiated a dialogue by mail between Japanese and Ukrainian mothers. Titled "Mother to Mother," the purpose of the correspondence was to aid the victims of Chernobyl. One hundred seven letters were exchanged; one of them came to Japan from Nina. Her letter began with the words "As victims of nuclear energy, we are sisters in misfortune," and was addressed to Shigeno Azuma, an elementary school teacher in Kanazawa City. With this letter began eight years of a friendship between Nina and Ms. Azuma that expanded to include their school pupils as well, fostering a bond between Chernobyl and the land of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In 1994, members of Project Gen in Kanazawa began translating these letters, and we were especially moved by the sensitivity and eloquence of Nina's words. That same year, a Kanazawa citizens' group invited Nina to visit our city and meet Ms. Azuma and her students. Nina also visited Hiroshima and prayed for those who had died in the atomic bombing.

After her visit, Nina began to write frequently in her letters about the connection between Chernobyl and Hiroshima and Nagasaki. "Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Chernobyl are links in the same chain," she wrote. "In the vessel of the Earth's sorrows, the tears of Chernobyl, Ukraine blend with the tears of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. People speak many different languages, but their cries of grief are the same. That is why we can understand each other."

Those of us in Project Gen naturally wanted to tell Nina, who had shown such concern for the bomb victims in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the story of Gen, the mischievous little boy who had survived the atomic hell of Hiroshima a half century earlier. In 2001 Project Gen published the entire *Barefoot Gen* series in Russian and

presented a set to Nina. She responded enthusiastically to Gen's story, and ultimately translated the series from Russian into Ukrainian.

In 2007 an atomic bomb exhibit was held in the old Russian city of Yaroslavl in support of a performance of the musical version of *Barefoot Gen* at an international theater festival. Members of Project Gen came from Japan and joined Nina in Yaroslavl to participate as volunteer staff. Today Nina continues to work for peace, writing poetry as well as articles for her local newspaper.

Namie Asazuma
 Coordinator, Project Gen

### For the Sake of the Future We Must Not Forget the Past

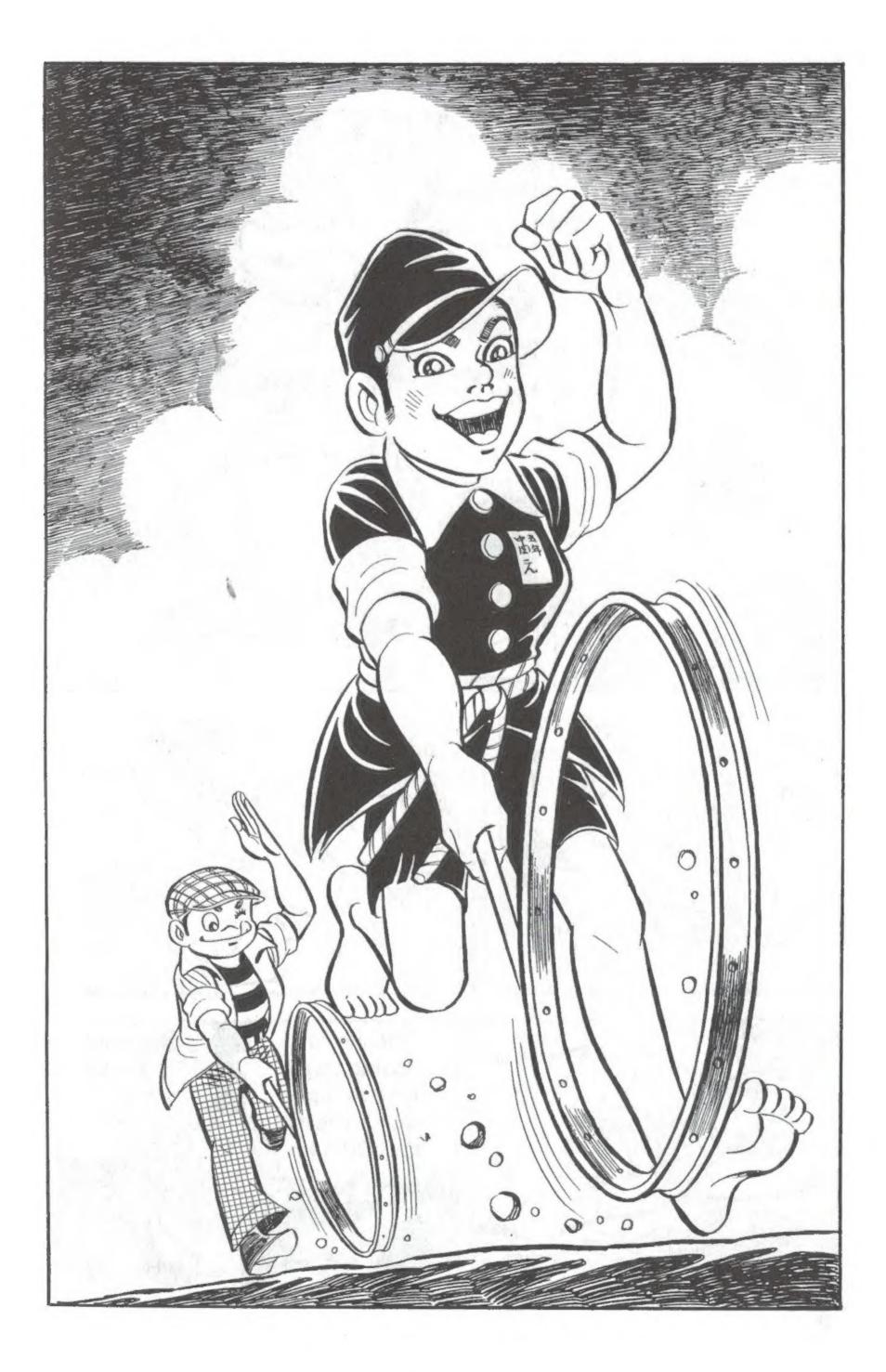
Nina Mikhailovna Vasilenko

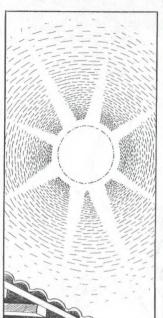
To Hiroshima... From Chernobyl in the distant Ukraine From the banks of the Dnieper, flowing on since time immemorial I bear greetings, flying through the realm of the imagination To come face to face with your sorrow-laden past Quietly, quietly... the breeze sighs Quietly, quietly... leaves whisper in the trees A sorrow-laden sun sets over Hiroshima Through empty, paneless windows The Atomic Dome gazes sadly upon river and town Its rooftop will never forget August 6, 1945 The atomic bomb exploding, the fear, the screams, the children's cries The horror of war and death, death, death,... Scores of lanterns like tiny houses float down the river Inside those tiny houses burn the souls of Shoji, of Yasushi Ripples breaking on the shore, the river sighs and quietly weeps There was a school here Four hundred children burned to death in an instant Name after name is engraved on stone tablets Red salvia blooms like blood filling the flower beds Sadako flew off to the stars on the wings of a crane Leaving what might have been a happier future on earth Scorched trees sprout young buds Like those trees Numata-san was scorched, yet lives on And now she greets us The atomic bomb destroyed Hiroshima But it could not destroy Numata-san's heart Today sweet oleander blooms everywhere Rising from the ruins, the town boasts proud rows of tall buildings People who have never known war fill the streets Quietly, quietly... if you listen you will hear The victims of the bomb sleeping under every footstep Six rivers carry the tears of Hiroshima to the sea The sea grows salty and bitter with those tears People of the earth, let us not ignore this warning Let us overcome war Let us put a curse on war

Let us have peace and happiness on earth!

#### **BAREFOOT GEN**

**BONES INTO DUST** 



















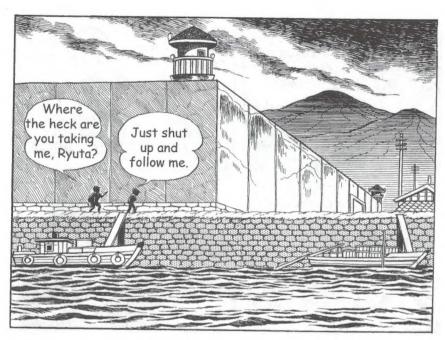












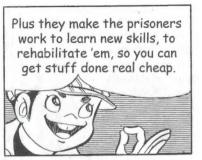




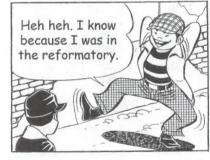


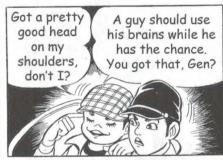












































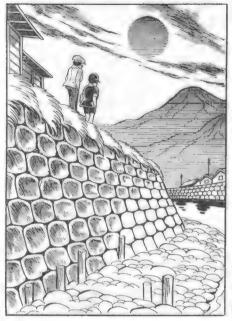




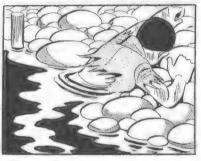








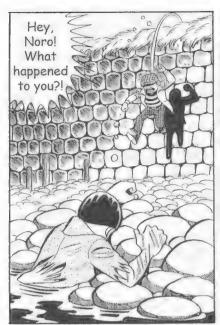


























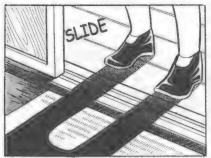




















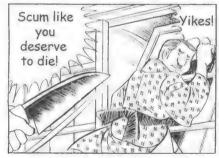












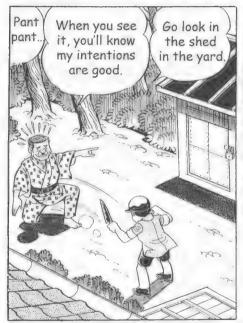






















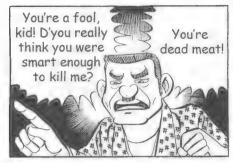






















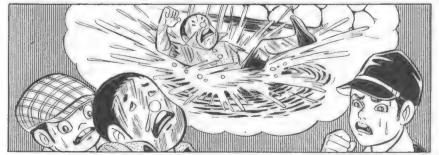














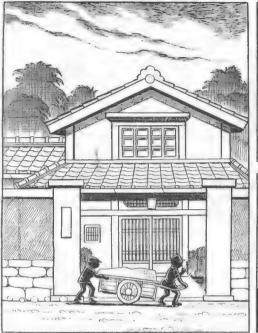


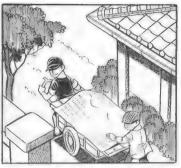


































































You better believe I am! And I ain't about to die now. Gen said if you showed remorse and agreed to pay for my funeral, I should forgive you.



But after what I just heard, there's no way! The only cure for a skunk like you is to die.





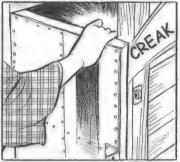














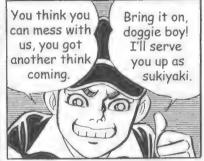












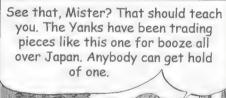






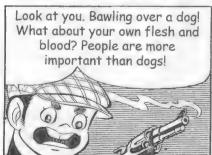








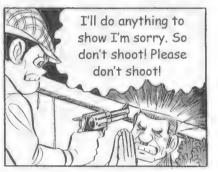






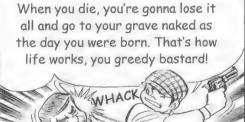






That's what you shoulda said to begin with. You can't take it with you,







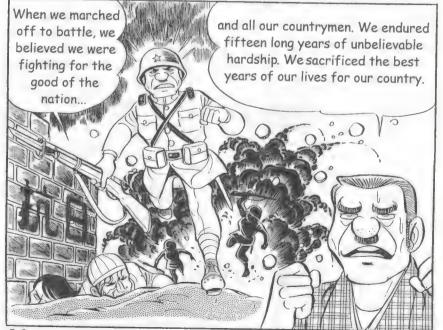








Writing on wall: Resist Japan







Banners: American and British devils
and Hiroshima and
Nagasaki were
vaporized in a flash
by atomic bombs.
Japan surrendered
only after millions
had died in vain.

Now our supposedly divine protector, the emperor, suddenly declares himself an ordinary mortal and tells us to bear the unbearable and endure the unendurable, as if it's not even his problem.



Headline: Emperor Proclaims Himself Human



I decided I would never believe anything our leaders said; ever again. And I decided I'd never trust anyone else either.





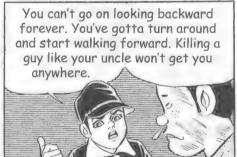
















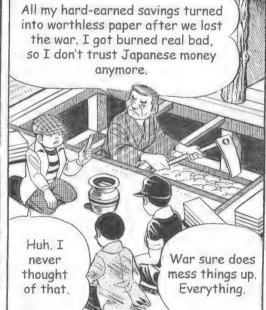




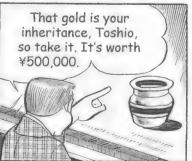
























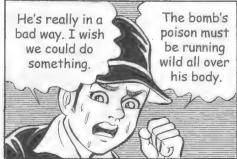




















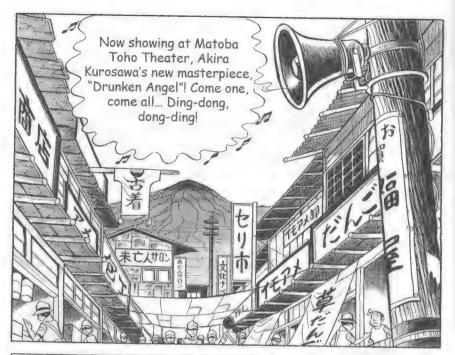




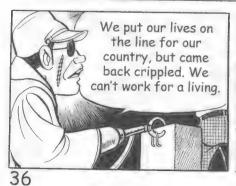














Ohh, the faces and voices of my family Calling for me to bring them honor As they wave their flags in farewell..











Sign: Happy Restaurant



















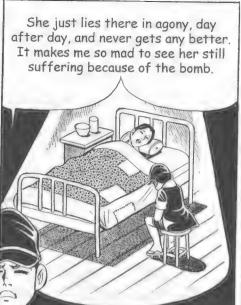












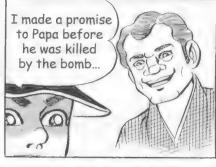








Thanks, Mr. Pak, but I don't believe in depending on other people's kindness. Even when things are tough, I try to rely on myself.



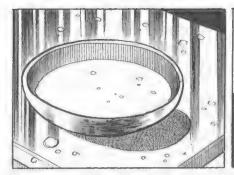










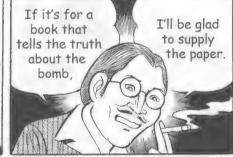










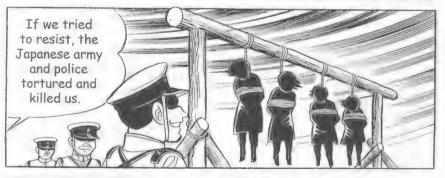












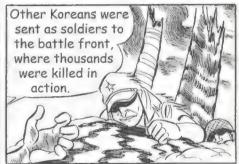


To survive we had to work for next to nothing at Japanese factories in Korea. They even made us take Japanese names.



Then, as if that weren't enough, they brought us to Japan for forced labor in mines and factories here, making us do the dirtiest, hardest work.

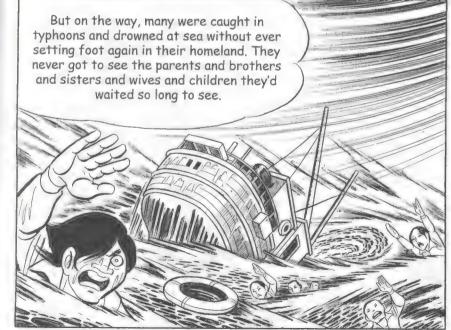
Some couldn't take it and tried to escape, but they always got caught and beaten. Many of them died.

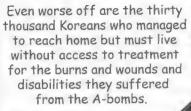


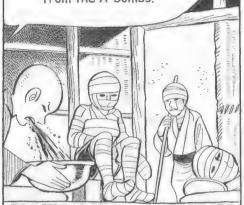










































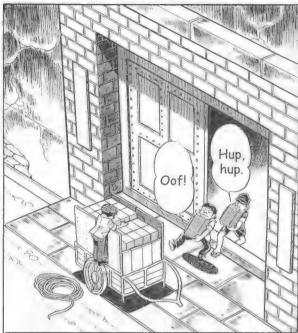
















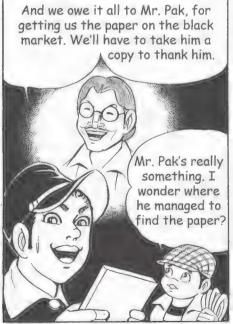


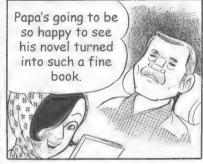














Title: The End of Summer



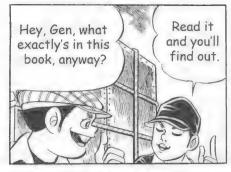










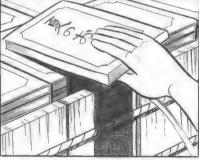








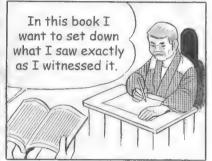




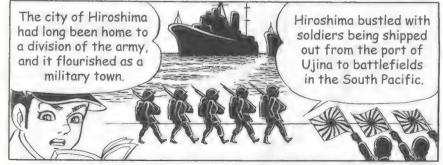
















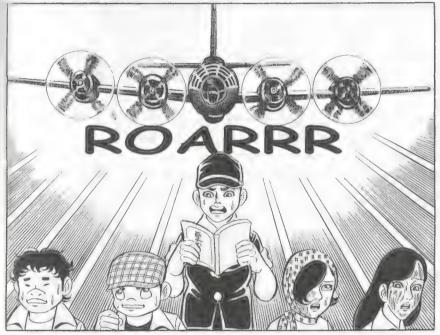














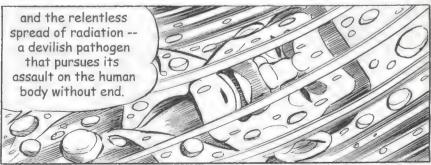


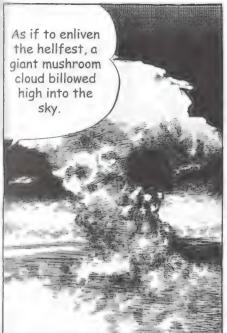




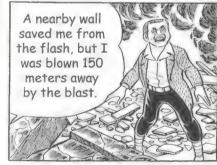






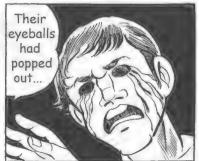


























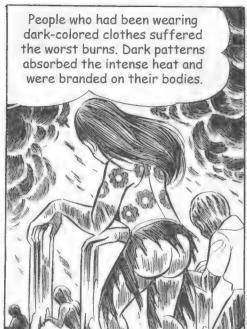
















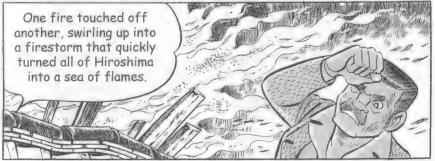


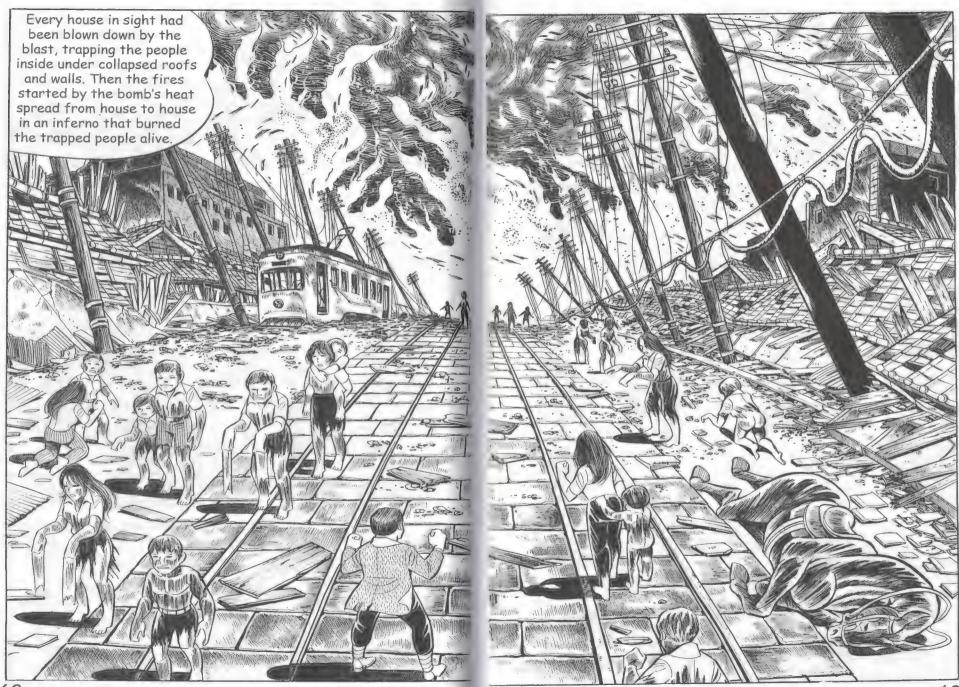




















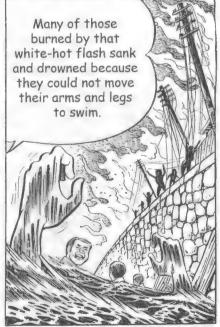




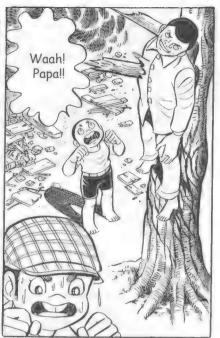




















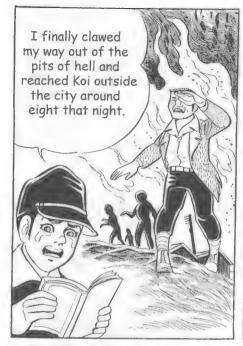




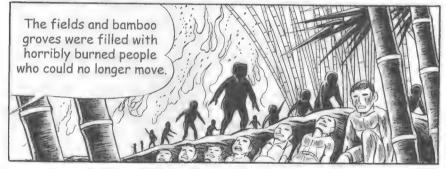






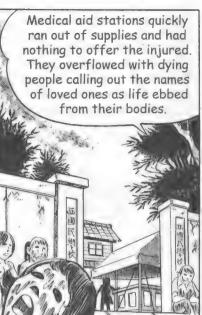




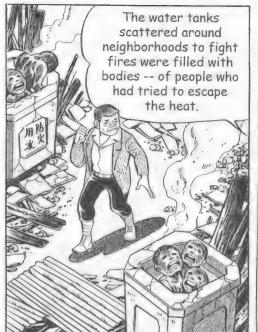








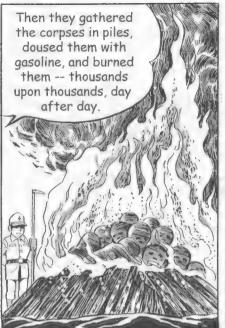


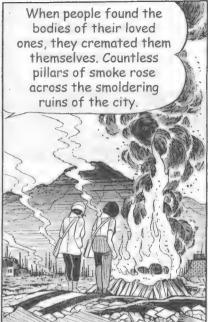




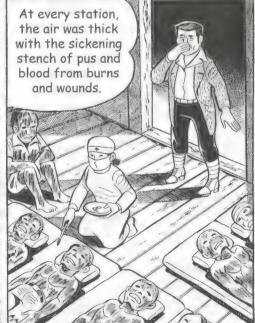


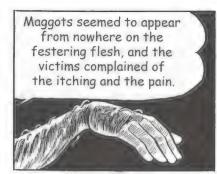




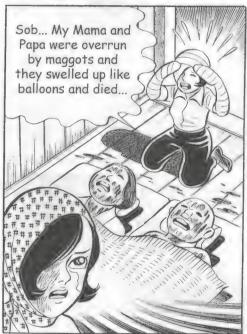




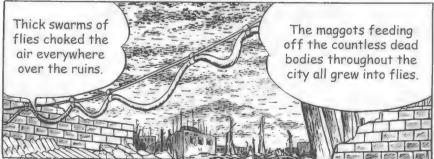




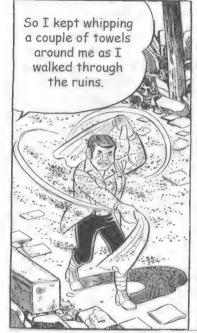


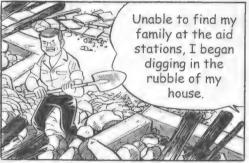


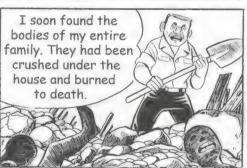






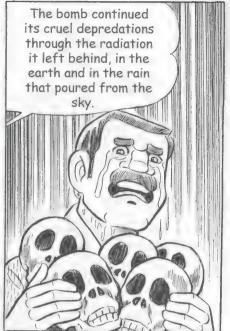




















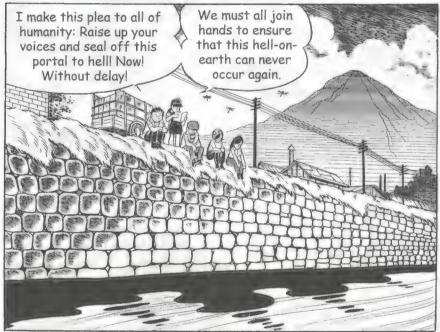


















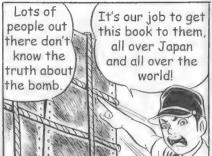




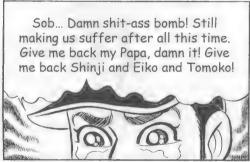






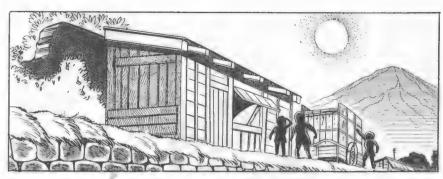






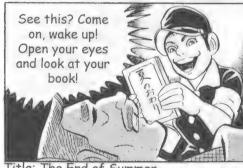






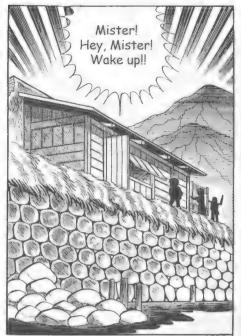














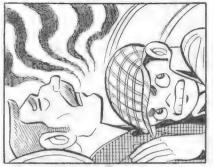






















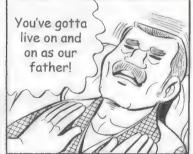
























































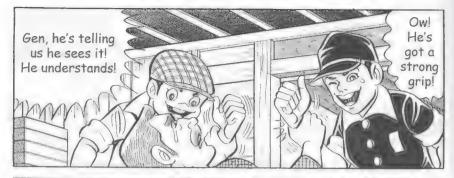






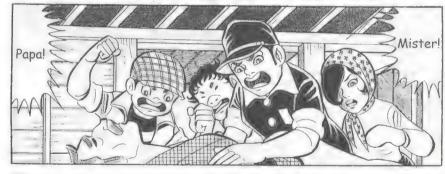


















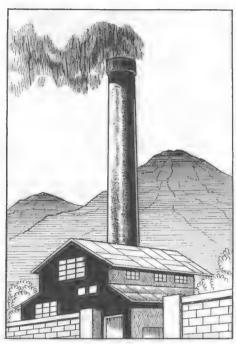


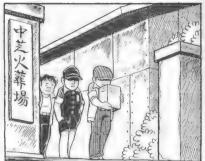












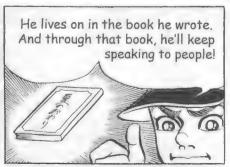
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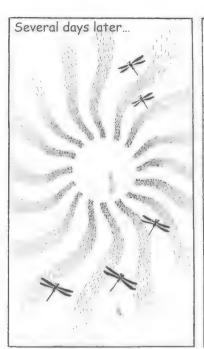






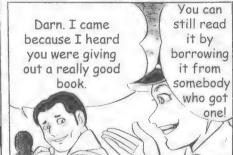


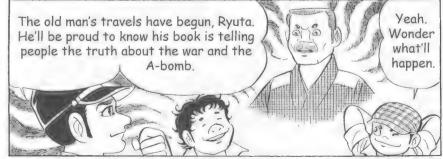




























































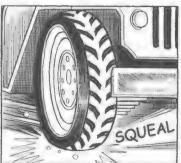










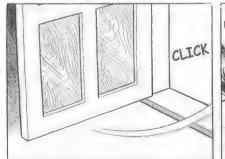














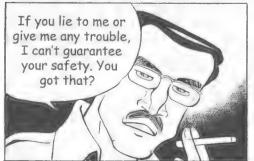




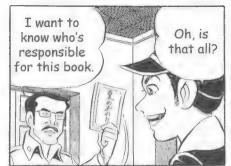


































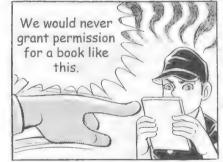










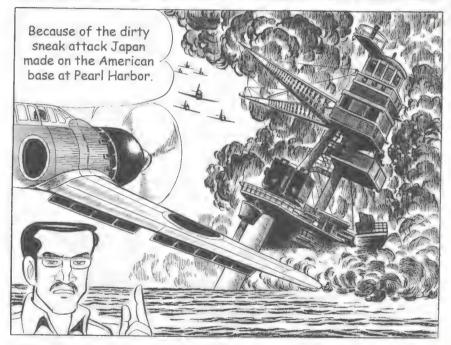




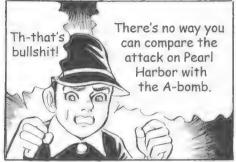




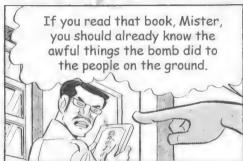


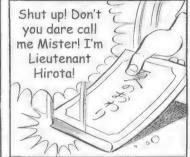










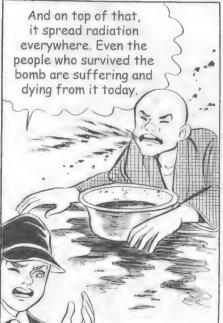


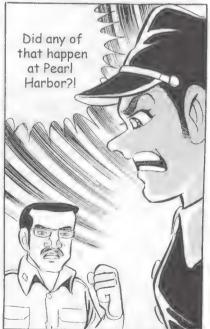








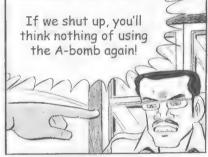




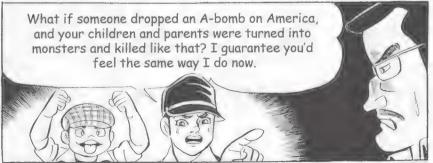
























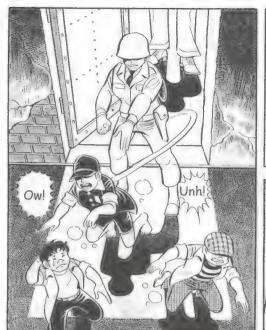


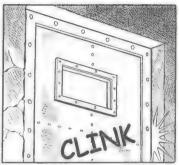
































































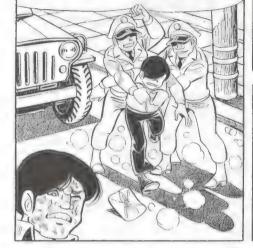


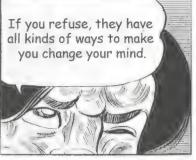






They seize people who've returned from Soviet territory, even minors. They handcuff and blindfold them, and take them to U.S. bases to turn them into spies.







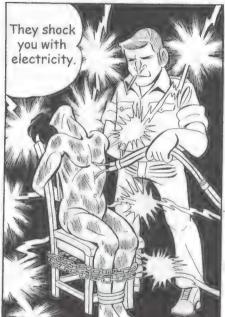






































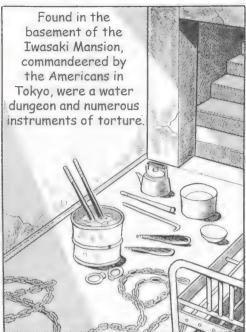


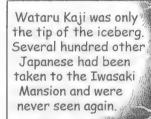
It's all cloaked in secrecy and carried out in the dark.

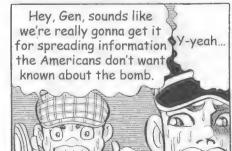
And their bases are outside the reach of Japanese law, so they can do whatever they want to us there and Japan can't say a thing.











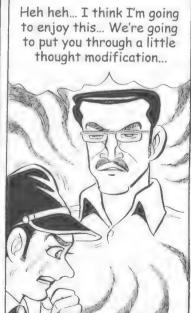














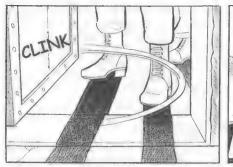






















































































































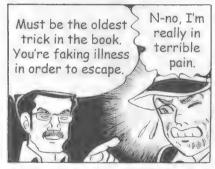














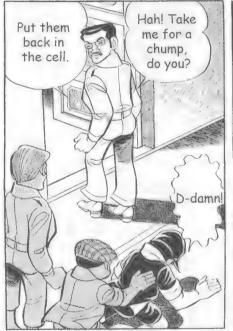




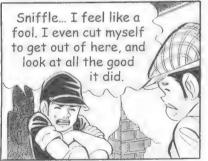




















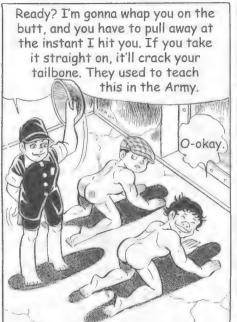






























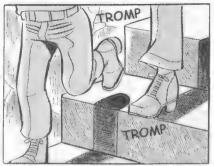


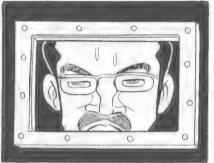














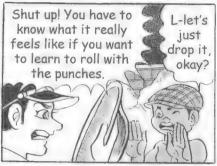








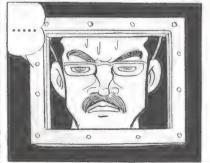


















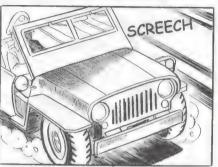










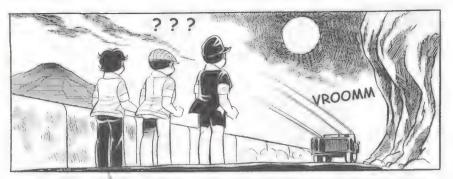








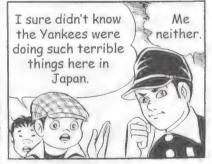




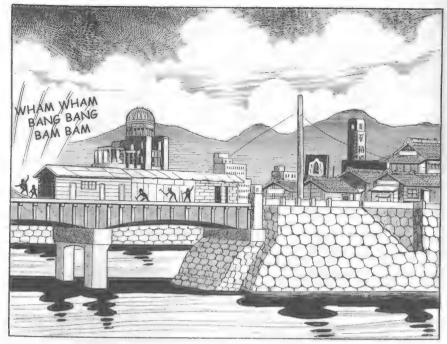














Sign: Taxi































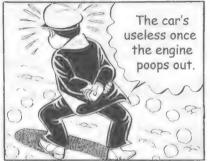






Drop two or three sugar cubes into the tank, and they mix with the gas and melt like candy in the engine. It gums everything up and burns the engine out.

















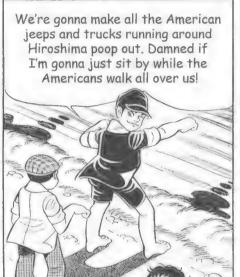




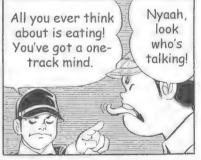


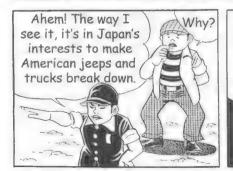






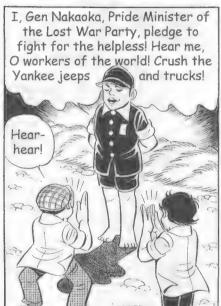






















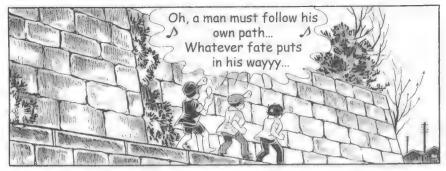


















This is JOKR, JOKR, Hiroshima's number one radio station! Bingbing-bing bo-o-nngg! It's 12 noon! Ding-ding dong-dong ding! Ta-daa de-dum de-dum!



Hope all you hungry folks across the country are enjoying a nice Sunday afternoon. It's time for our weekly amateur singing contest!











haw!









We have some announcements to make. Distribution of today's catch will begin shortly. Bring a pot and line up at your nearest fishmonger's!



Next, the returnees bulletin. I will read a list of the repatriates who arrived at Maizuru Harbor today. Arriving from Sakhalin is Mr. Magoichi Ota, originally from Hiroshima, and Mrs. Ryoko Hanagawa, hometown not











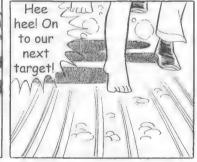


And now a word from his majesty, the emperor: "Regretfully, we have farted. We command you, our loyal subjects, to hold your noses and take cover."

Crackle, snap, pfft... Oops, it appears we have lost our signal.

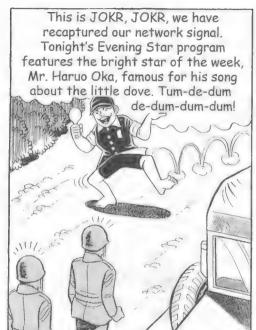






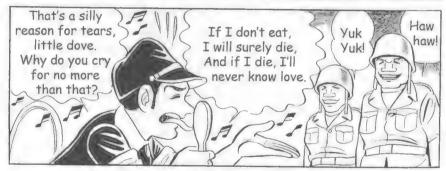










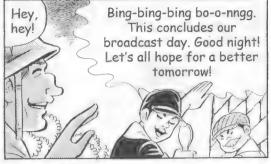






















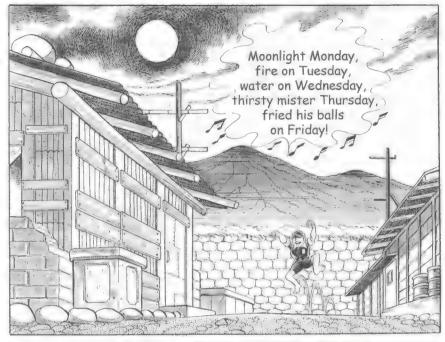


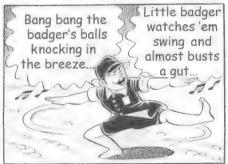


























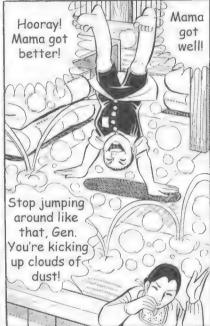














































































































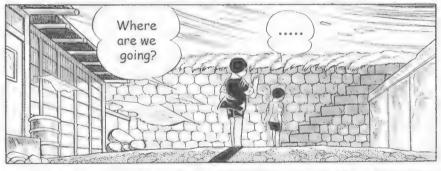


















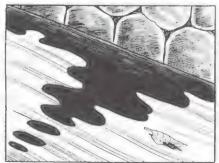


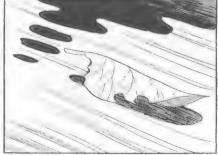




















The doctor said there wasn't anything more he could do for her, so we should let her do what she wants in the time she has left...?













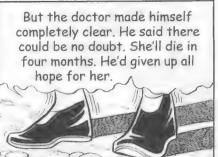




























S-so It's true that it's Mama has only really four months true? to live?















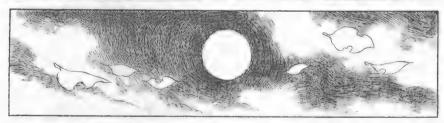










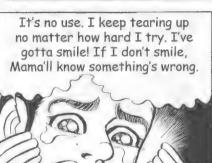
























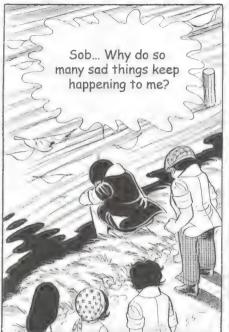


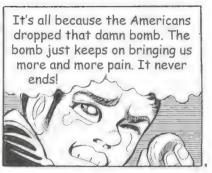




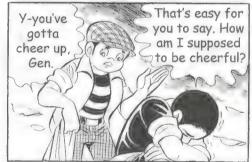




















Stop feeling so sorry for yourself, Gen! Start thinking about giving your mother the best memories you can in the time she has left! That's what I'm gonna do. She was always so good

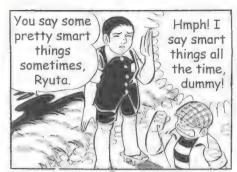






























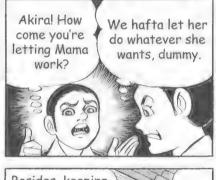








































































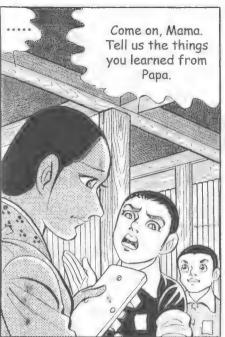








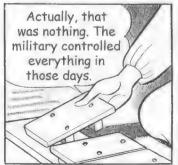






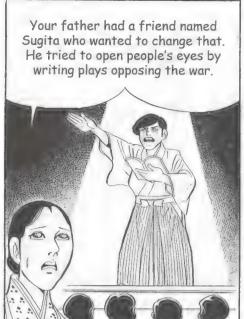








Placard: "Sacred War"



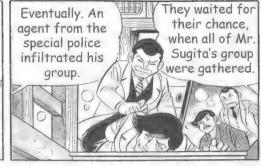






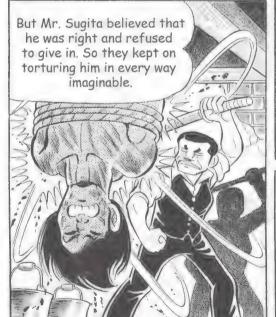




















They beat him day after day, until his whole body swelled to twice its normal size.

And in the end they killed him.









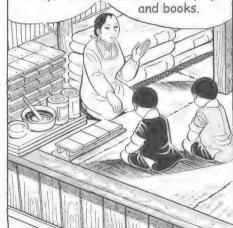


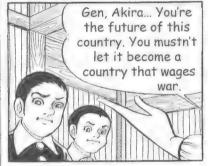


And that's exactly what happened.
Cities all over Japan were burned to the ground, the country ran out of food, millions were killed... and then came the atomic bomb...



We mustn't ever let Japan go back to that horrible dark age. We mustn't let the government make laws that allow the police and the military to keep us from speaking freely, or to censor films and plays

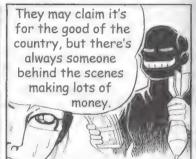


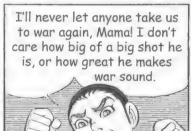










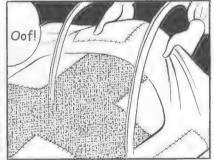


















You can't be clinging to me forever, you know. Sooner or later I'll die, and you and your brothers will each go your separate ways, and you'll have to stand on your own two feet.















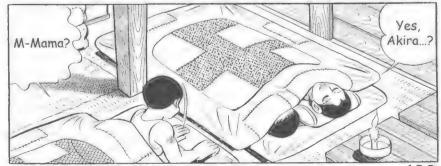
Four months from now, I'll never be able to feel it again. Four months from now, Mama's going to be dead...



Starting tomorrow I'm gonna really bust my ass. I'm gonna make a ton of money so I can take Mama to Kyoto.













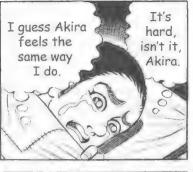




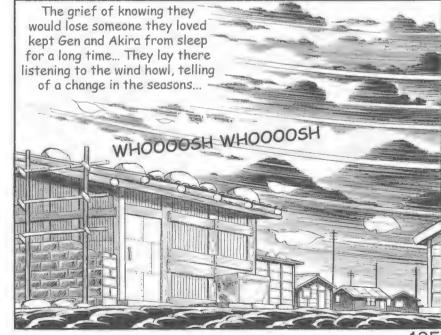


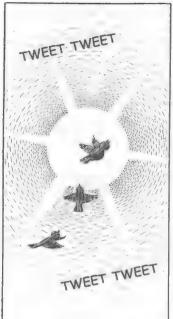






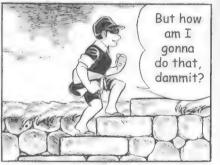






































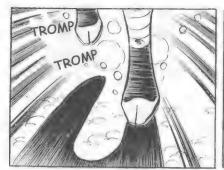




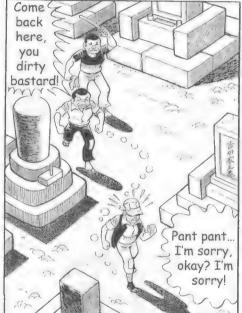








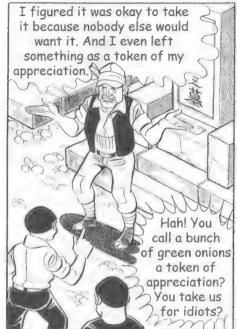






































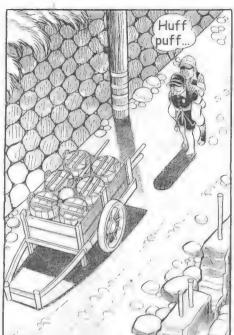














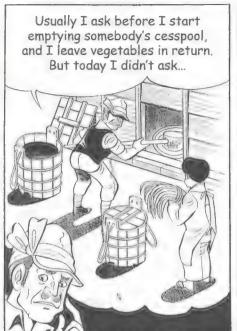






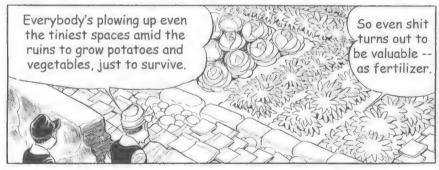


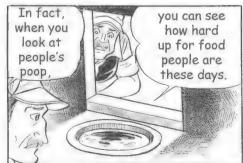






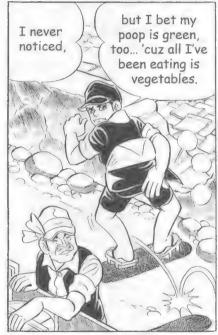


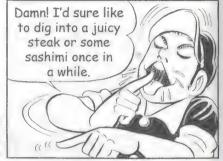








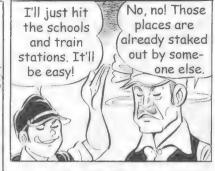








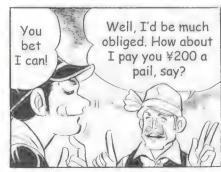






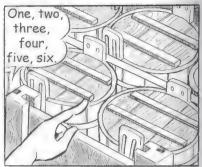
























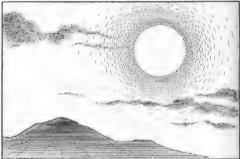








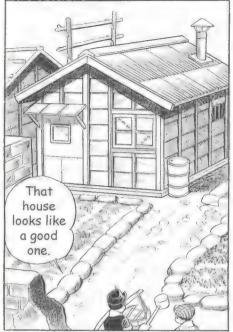


















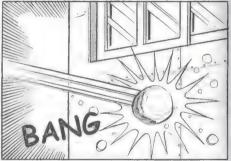






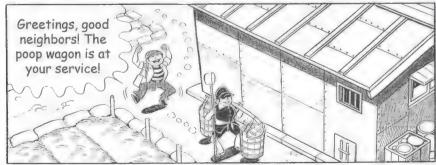




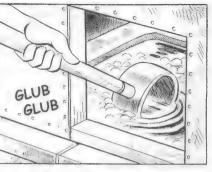






















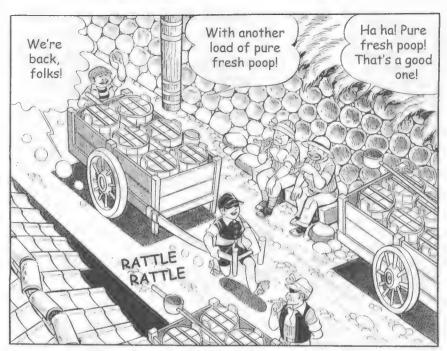








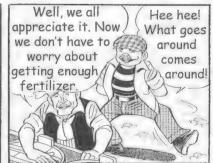








































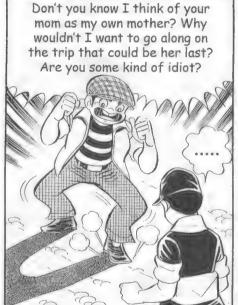




Bill: 100 yen





































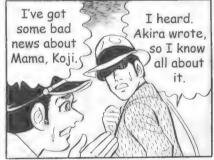






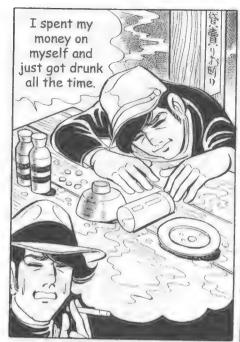


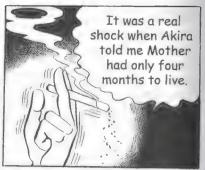
























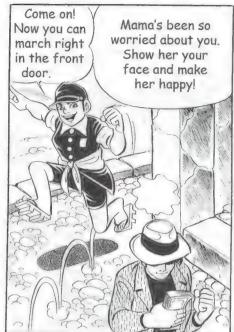










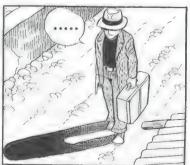






































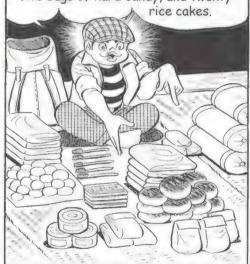








Let's see... five toothbrushes, three bars of soap, ten towels, twenty bean-jam buns, eight candy bars, five bags of hard candy, and twenty rice cakes.













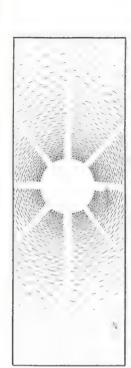










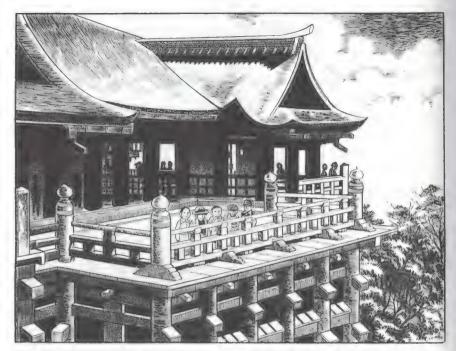






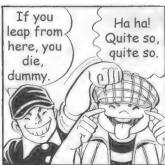


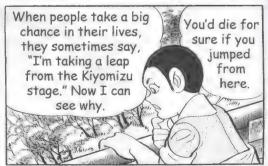




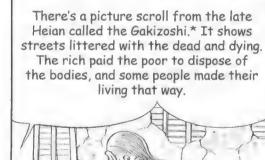




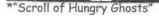








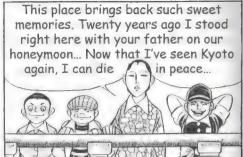








































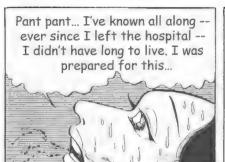






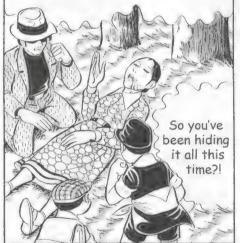








But I knew you'd all worry if you saw my pain... I wanted my last days to be full of laughing and good cheer...













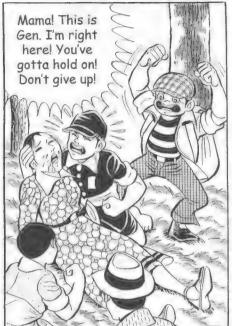


























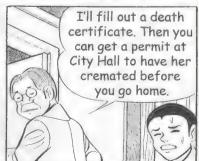






Your mother must have been a very strong-willed woman. I'm amazed she was able to travel this far when her body was so riddled with disease.









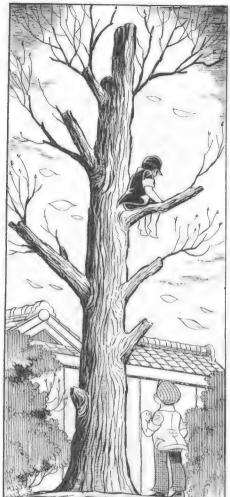
























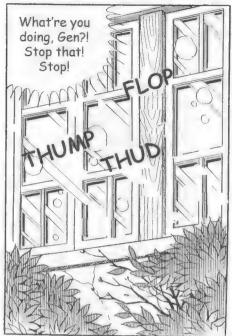




















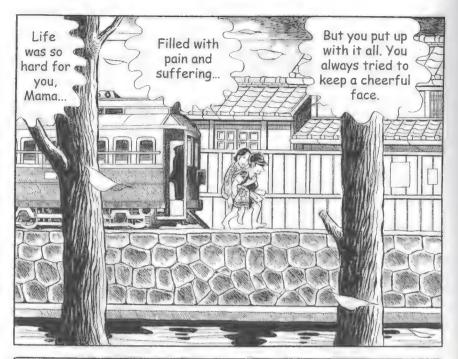






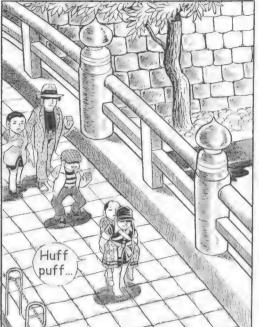














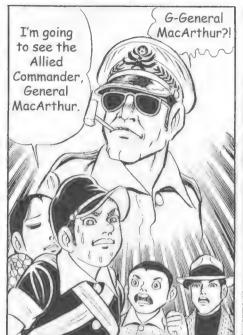




















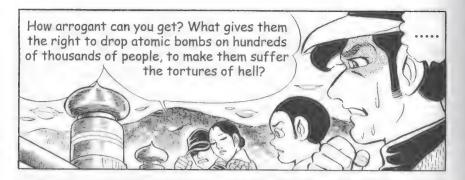












It takes two sides to make a fight. Japan and America both did bad things. Why is Japan the only one being punished? It was America that dropped those horrible bombs!



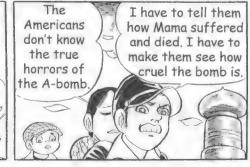
How would MacArthur feel if his mom or his kids had to suffer and die like that from an A-bomb?



It shouldn't matter whether you're Japanese or American. Even if they won, the Americans ought to take responsibility for what they did.









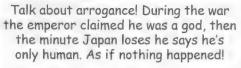


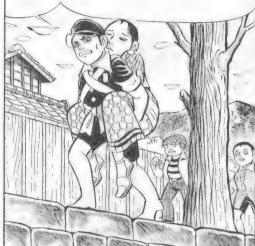








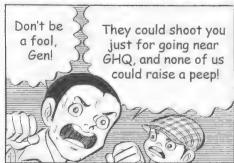










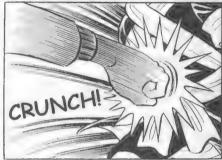










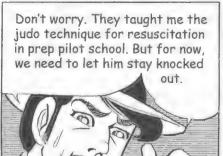














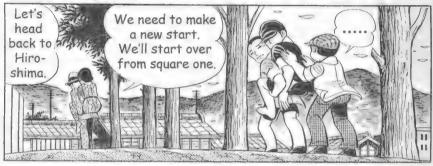
























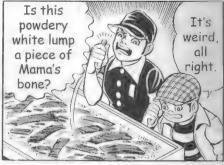


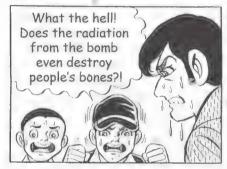










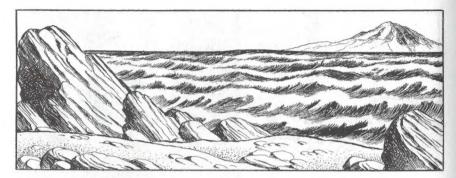
























Be like a stalk of wheat, Gen!
Be like wheat that sprouts in
the dead of winter and gets
trampled over and over, but
grows straight and tall and
bears good fruit!



Sooner or later I'm going to die, Gen, and you and your brothers will each go your separate ways. You'll have to stand strong and tall on your own. You can't be clinging to me forever!

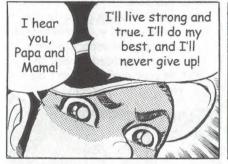














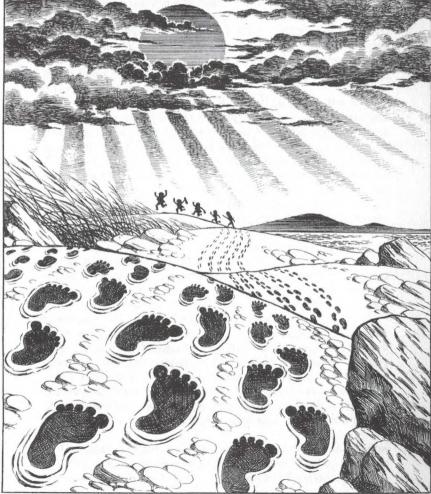














## About Project Gen

## Namie Asazuma Coordinator, Project Gen

In the pages of *Barefoot Gen*, Keiji Nakazawa brings to life a tragedy unlike any that had ever befallen the human race before. He does not simply depict the destructive horror of nuclear weapons, but tells of the cruel fate they visited upon victims and survivors in the years to come. Yet Gen, the young hero of this story, somehow manages to overcome one hardship after another, always with courage and humor. *Barefoot Gen's* tale of hope and human triumph in the face of nuclear holocaust has inspired volunteer translators around the world, as well as people working in a variety of other media. Over the years *Gen* has been made into a three-part live-action film, a feature-length animation film, an opera, and a musical.

The first effort to translate Barefoot Gen from the original Japanese into other languages began in 1976, when Japanese peace activists Masahiro Oshima and Yukio Aki walked across the United States as part of that year's Transcontinental Walk for Peace and Social Justice. Their fellow walkers frequently asked them about the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, and one of them happened to have a copy of Hadashi no Gen in his backpack. The Americans on the walk, astonished that an atomic bomb survivor had written about it in cartoon form, urged their Japanese friends to translate it into English. Upon returning to Japan, Oshima and Aki founded Project Gen, a non-profit, all-volunteer group of young Japanese and Americans living in Tokyo, to do just that. Project Gen went on to translate the first four volumes of Barefoot Gen into English. One or more of these volumes have also been published in French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Swedish, Norwegian, Indonesian, Tagalog, and Esperanto.

By the 1990s Project Gen was no longer active. In the meantime, author Keiji Nakazawa had gone on to complete ten volumes of *Gen*, and expressed his wish to see the entire story made available to non-Japanese readers. Parts of the first four volumes had also been abridged in translation. A new generation of volunteers responded by reviving Project Gen and producing a new, complete and unabridged translation of the entire Gen series.

The second incarnation of Project Gen got its start in Moscow in 1994, when a Japanese student, Minako Tanabe, launched "Project Gen in Russia" to translate *Gen* into Russian. After pub-

lishing the first three volumes in Moscow, the project relocated to Kanazawa, Japan, where volunteers Yulia Tachino and Namie Asazuma had become acquainted with *Gen* while translating a story about Hiroshima into Russian. The Kanazawa volunteers, together with Takako Kanekura in Russia, completed Russian volumes 4 through 10 between 1999 and 2001.

In the spring of 2000, the Kanazawa group formally established a new Project Gen in Japan. Nine volunteers spent the next three years translating all ten volumes of *Gen* into English. The translators are Kazuko Futakuchi, Michael Gordon, Kyoko Honda, Yukari Kimura, Nobutoshi Kohara, Kiyoko Nishita, George Stenson, Michiko Tanaka, and Kazuko Yamada.

In 2002, author Keiji Nakazawa put the Kanazawa team in contact with Alan Gleason, a member of the first Project Gen, who introduced them to Last Gasp of San Francisco, publisher of the original English translation of *Gen*. Last Gasp agreed to publish the new, unabridged translation of all ten volumes, of which this book is one.

In the hope that humanity will never repeat the terrible tragedy of the atomic bombing, the volunteers of Project Gen want children and adults all over the world to hear Gen's story. Through translations like this one, we want to help Gen speak to people in different countries in their own languages. Our prayer is that Barefoot Gen will contribute in some small way to the abolition of nuclear weapons before this new century is over.

Write to Project Gen c/o Asazuma, Nagasaka 3-10-20, Kanazawa 921-8112, Japan



Keiji Nakazawa lives with his wife in the suburbs of Tokyo, and remains actively involved in the work of the Project Gen volunteers. Now retired from cartooning, his most recent project was a live action film he wrote and directed about young people growing up in postwar Hiroshima. He is currently working on another film scenario.